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New Orleans' Mayor in Cuba seeking opportunities in economic development, trade

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New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell wants to see how Cuban history has “produced unique opportunities and challenges” in the areas of economic development, trade, health care and education.

Cantrell and several staff members are in Havana and are expected to be in Cuba through Sunday.

In a brief release, Cantrell’s press secretary, LaTonya Norton, said the mayor and her staff are part of a large group that includes elected officials as well as leaders in the public and private sector.

On Wednesday, a Cuban government official posted pictures on Twitter of Cantrell in a meeting with Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, director of the U.S. Section of Cuba’s Foreign Ministry.

The Times-Picayune obtained travel documents that show Cantrell is expected to tour Old Havana on Wednesday. On Thursday, the mayor would head east of Havana and visit Cuba’s major port, Mariel Special Economic Development Zone as well as the Latin American School of Medicine.

Friday’s agenda, according to the Times-Picayune, includes a visit to the Literacy Museum and the University of Havana.

Local 10 was able to independently verify the mayor will be meeting with Havana’s vice

president of the Provincial Assembly on Thursday and with the first female president of University of Havana Friday.

In May of 2016, former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu visited Cuba as part of a delegation with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, a first for that group since 1978.

Landrieu and his counterparts were on the island looking to expand diplomatic relationships with the Cuban government.

The visit took place months after then President Barack Obama made his historic visit to Cuba after re-opening diplomatic relations with the communist island.

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